

Panoche/Silver Creek CRMP

Information and Update

May 2002

Overview

The Panoche/Silver Creek Coordinated Resource Management and Planning (P/SC CRMP) Team was formed in 1989. The P/SC CRMP incorporates the Panoche/Silver Creek, Little Panoche Creek and the Tumey Gulch Watersheds in northwestern Fresno and eastern San Benito Counties into its boundaries. The combined area of the three watersheds is approximately 430,000 acres and ranges from 100 to 5,000 feet in elevation. The local landowners and land managers, local, state and federal agencies and other interested parties participate in this program to ensure its continued success. In the Panoche/Silver Creek Watershed, Silver Creek enters Panoche Creek upstream of the California Aqueduct and the California Aqueduct is siphoned under Panoche Creek. During flood events, Panoche Creek flows into the Mendota Pool then into the San Joaquin River. Floodwaters from the Tumey Gulch watershed flow down Manning Ave. and backup along the California Aqueduct, until the level reach a state that allows the flood waters to weir into the Aqueduct. Flood releases from Little Panoche Reservoir, which is operated by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, flow over a weir into the California Aqueduct. Flood waters also build up along the California Aqueduct then is pumped into the Aqueduct when the levels are to high. The primary concerns in these watersheds are flooding, erosion, sediment transport and the water quality that enters into the San Joaquin River and the California Aqueduct.

Projects Completed

- Sedimentation Study identifying problems at the confluence of Panoche and Silver Creeks and proposing Best Management Practices for addressing these problems.
- Watershed Assessment of the Panoche Creek watershed above the confluence, identifying potential pilot projects and monitoring sites to manage flood flows, erosion and sediment transport.
- Tamarisk (Salt Cedar) inventory mapping the extent to which this plant has invaded the PSC watershed.
- Three land treatment projects just upstream of the California Aqueduct which include: 1) removal of invasive plants; 2) removal of revegetation in center of low-flow channel to direct water away from streambanks; 3) planting of native trees, shrubs and grasses; 4) redirecting of tail water out of the channel and 5) installation of pipe and wire revetment to protect an existing structure.
- Implementation of a watershed monitoring program that includes 1) three new stream stations in the upper watershed; 2) nine landowners voluntarily monitoring precipitation throughout the watershed; 3) five large precipitation gauges in the extreme upper reaches of the PSCW and 4) photomonitoring of all implemented projects in the watershed.

Projects In-Progress

- Silver Creek and Panoche Creek watershed alluvial fan assessment and management plan.
- Implementation of best management practices between I-5 and Belmont Avenue.
- Implementation of pilot projects the upper watershed of the Panoche Creek drainage.

- Complete a contract with CALFED Drinking Water Quality program to complete an Assessment of the Little Panoche and Cantua Creek watersheds.

Proposed Projects (seeking funding)

- Continued operation of the Panoche Creek @ I5 Streamgage--\$25,000 per year
- Development and implementation of an outreach and education program—\$40,000
- Development of a Selenium Index to assess the potential for selenium yield from croplands and rangelands (to be used to prioritize and monitor projects)--\$125,000
- Tumey Gulch watershed assessment, plan, and projects--\$150,000
- Design and construction of low-flow crossing at North Avenue to stabilize Panoche Creek upstream of California Aqueduct and reduce sedimentation--\$625,000.

For more information about the Panoche/Silver Creek Watershed CRMP, please contact Nettie R. Drake, Manager, 29415 Ruth Hill Rd., Squaw Valley, CA 93675, (559) 289-4928 or nrdrake@psnw.com.